

Oryx

The International Journal of Conservation

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<http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>

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The Society was founded in 1903 as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire, and subsequently named the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society. Fauna & Flora International is conserving the planet's threatened species and ecosystems – with the people and communities who depend on them.

Oryx - The International Journal of Conservation, is now published quarterly by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Fauna & Flora International. It is a leading scientific journal of biodiversity conservation, conservation policy and sustainable use, with a particular interest in material that has the potential to improve conservation management and practice.

The website, <http://www.oryxthejournal.org/>, plays a vital role in the journal's capacity-building work. Amongst the site's many attributes is a compendium of sources of free software for researchers and details of how to access Oryx at reduced rates or for free in developing countries. The website also includes extracts from Oryx issues 10, 25 and 50 years ago, and a gallery of research photographs that provide a fascinating insight into the places, species and people described in the journal.

The [Rhino Resource Center](#) posted this PDF in June 2009. We are grateful for the permission.

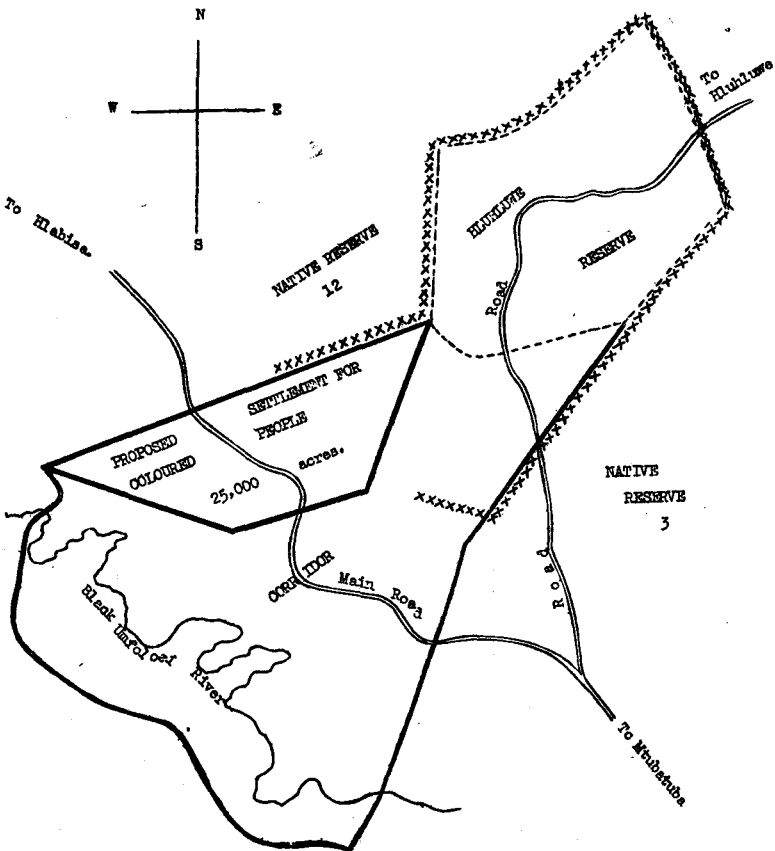
FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ZULULAND GAME RESERVES AND PARKS BOARD

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1944

The full Report can be consulted at the Office. The following extracts have been selected as likely to interest our readers.

Accommodation of Visitors.—Although the Board has continued its policy of restricting expenditure wherever possible,

- Existing Hluhluwe Reserve Approx. 35,000 acres.
- Corridor ————— Approx. 85,000 acres including Coloured Settlement 25,000 acres.
- Fencing completed x x x x x x x x 62 miles.
- Roads = = = = =



it will be observed from this report that there has been a steady record of expansion. The Provincial Administration has recognized the necessity for development in order that visitors, who may be expected after the conclusion of hostilities, may be accommodated. Much, of course, remains to be done in this direction, and the Board, through its Secretary, submitted certain suggestions to the Provincial Post-War Reconstruction Commission, presided over by Mr. D. E. Mitchell, M.E.C., who is personally well acquainted with the area. These suggestions included the erection of a bridge over the Estuary to replace the Pont; the construction of a road from the continuation of the existing road to the Indian Ocean; the dredging of necessary channels in the Lake to facilitate transport by larger boats; further Rest Hut accommodation on the shores of the Lake, and the proper development of places frequented by visitors; further facilities at Hluhluwe and the fencing of the corridor.

Map showing Hluhluwe Reserve and Corridor.—A rough map showing the boundaries of the Hluhluwe Reserve as proclaimed, the position of the Corridor, and the area already fenced, is attached hereto in order that the remarks which follow in this report may be more easily understood.

Game Population.—The Game Conservator has compiled the following list, which gives the approximate number of species of game animals presently found in the area comprising the Hluhluwe Reserve as proclaimed and that portion of the Corridor north of the main road which is indicated on the map. It should be stated that very few animals are to be found within, say, three miles of the main road.

	<i>Minimum</i>		<i>Minimum</i>
White Rhino	12	Reedbuck	300
Black Rhino	150	Mountain Reedbuck	100 ¹
Buffalo	550	Wildebeeste	650
Nyala	500	Zebra	550
Impala	500	Bushbuck	1,000 ²
Kudu	400	Warthog	1,500 ²
Waterbuck	300	Wild Pig	1,000 ²
Klipspringer	50	Mkumbi	100
Steenbuck	50	Ipiti	100
Duiker	350		

It will thus be seen that there are over 7,500 animals within the area comprising the proclaimed Hluhluwe Reserve and that

¹ In the last census the number of Mountain Reedbuck was given as 250. This figure included a number of these animals which were in the habit of going to and fro.

² These figures can be regarded as a minimum. There are probably many more.

portion of the Corridor extending to the main road. This area comprises approximately 55,000 acres, excluding the area which was earmarked for a settlement for coloured people. The area from the main road to the point beyond the Black Umfolozi River is approximately 35,000 acres. The Board maintain that with animals numbering over 7,500 of all species there is not the slightest danger that the fauna of Zululand is in any danger of extinction. Moreover, there is ample suitable land for expansion, and when the whole Corridor is placed definitely under the jurisdiction of the Board, there will be sufficient land to accommodate all the White Rhino in Zululand. It will be recalled that from the outset the Board suggested the addition of the Corridor, in order to provide a permanent sanctuary for these animals. The Board is more than ever convinced of the imperative necessity for such a home to be provided.

The grazing and water in the Hluhluwe Reserve have been more than sufficient at all times, and it may be mentioned that 63·15 inches of rain fell during 1943, the average over a number of years being approximately 50 inches.

Fencing.—The map shows that 60 miles of fencing have been completed. It was hoped to continue the fence as a first instalment across the Corridor, roughly half-way between the Hluhluwe Reserve and the main road, but, unfortunately, material could not be obtained. The Board hopes when material is released that it will be possible to carry on the fence to embrace the whole Corridor. Further experience has proved that the game can be prevented from wandering by means of a fence, and it is safe to say that since the erection of the fence none of the larger animals, including rhino, buffalo, zebra, and wildebeeste, have been reported outside the fence. As regards the smaller animals, it is only to be expected that they may occasionally pass between the wires, but for no appreciable distance. As the grazing is so good within the Reserve and sanctuary assured, there is no incentive to wander. It is, of course, essential that the fence be properly maintained and firebreaks kept clear of all growth. In passing, the Board invites attention to the fact that it costs less than 10s. per mile per annum to keep the fence in first-class order.

Improvements at Hluhluwe.—During the year under review the accommodation for visitors has been increased and there are now sleeping facilities for eighty. Further rondavels and bathrooms have been provided, and a large kitchen. The water supply is now in course of improvement by the provision of a filtration process. Many trees have been planted at the

Rest Huts to provide shade for visitors, and the road from Headquarters to the Rest Huts has been planted on both sides with ornamental trees, which are doing well.

Visitors.—During the year over 1,000 visitors visited the Reserve. As was to be expected, there were not many long distance visitors. There were, however, many hundreds of Service men and women. It has been found possible to facilitate such visits, and thus give a considerable number from overseas the opportunity to visit the area. There are many references to the enjoyable period spent in the Reserve, and the following examples are quoted from the Visitors' Book :—

“Forty years all over the world. A Garden of Eden at last.”

And again :—

“Six years' travel and no place as beautiful.”

“The men of vision who made this possible will be blessed by the future generations.”

Hippo.—The Board records that there has been a satisfactory increase in the number of hippo but, as happens every year, four or five of these animals have died as the result of fights. There have been no untoward incidents and visitors have obeyed the directions of the staff. There are at least 400 hippos in the area comprising the Estuary, Lake, and False Bay.

Bird Life.—Owing to the inundation of some of the islands on which birds usually nest, large numbers moved to the northern end of the Lake, but they are now returning to their old haunts.

Crocodiles.—Up to the present no action has been taken to reduce the number of crocodiles. These reptiles are increasing to such an extent that steps may have to be taken to reduce the numbers. Although it has been ascertained that the diet of a crocodile consists very largely of barbel, and therefore does not affect materially sporting fish, it is desirable that the numbers should be confined to places away from residential areas. If no action is taken to prevent undue increase it follows that the reptiles will wander into such areas. The Board recognizes, of course, that crocodiles are one of the attractions to visitors, and it does not propose to embark upon any wholesale destruction.

Amenities.—Although there have been fewer visitors at Fannies Island, general sanitary supervision has been maintained. A first-class road has been constructed from Nyalazi River Siding to Charter's Creek, a distance of about eight miles. This has proved of great value and it is now possible for the Game

Conservator to pay more frequent visits. It is the intention of the Board to make the area available to visitors as soon as conditions return to normal.

False Bay Area.—The difficulties which arose in connection with the transfer to the Board of the area comprising the Forestry Reserve have been dealt with in previous reports. The Board records with pleasure that these difficulties have now been overcome and it will be possible to take action to exercise general supervision over an area which is frequented by large numbers of visitors during certain seasons. It is intended to investigate the possibility of obtaining drinking water and to provide camping sites, sanitary conveniences, and such other amenities as are possible. It is understood that the Provincial Authorities have decided to construct a road from the main North Coast Road to False Bay. It has long been felt that steps should be taken to improve the conditions here. The Board also proposes to make bait available for anglers.

Scientific Research.—It will be recalled that at the request of the Board Dr. C. von Bonde, Director of Fisheries, visited St. Lucia in June, 1940. He then submitted a valuable report on a Marine Biological Survey of St. Lucia Estuary, St. Lucia Lake, and the Umfolozi River. This report was based on a rather hurried visit and Dr. von Bonde then suggested that when normal conditions again prevail a detailed survey should be undertaken. The Board regards it as essential that such a survey should be made as soon as possible. Questions arise from time to time which cannot be dealt with in the absence of advice from a properly qualified biologist with experience of marine surveys. The Board appreciates that the services of such a scientist cannot be made available at the present time. It may not be out of place to enumerate some of the problems which require consideration. For example, it has been suggested that the number of pelicans should be reduced, as it is alleged that they devour considerable quantities of fish. On the other hand, it is claimed that they live on small surface feeding fish and, therefore, are not a menace so far as sporting fish are concerned. It cannot be gainsaid that these birds are of considerable interest to visitors. Opinions are often expressed regarding the reasons for periodical shortages of fish. Some hold that fishing at St. Lucia has consistently deteriorated during the past few years. Most anglers pay periodical visits during holiday months. It may be that good fishing coincided with their visits and they are apt to form wrong conclusions if similar conditions do not prevail at all times. Various opinions are expressed regarding

the cause of such periodical shortage. Some say that they are caused by an undue proportion of fresh water and silt caused by floods. Others say that when the water is discoloured fish are not easily caught. The fact remains that at times fishing is good and it is quite possible that if data were available over a period of years, it might be found that on the whole the position has not changed materially. Dr. von Bonde suggested that the area closed between the Pont and the Mouth should remain closed for a period in order that the effect of such closing could be observed. It has been suggested that the closing has made no material difference, and that it should be now reopened. These questions, and others, the Board feels difficulty in dealing with in the absence of scientific advice, and has come to the conclusion that no drastic changes should be made in the meantime.

In passing, the Board refers to a proposal which it cordially supports that University Students interested in Botany, Biology, and kindred subjects should be afforded facilities for study at St. Lucia. It has been suggested that simple sleeping accommodation with laboratory facilities should be provided to enable students to study marine life. This suggestion has met with the unqualified support of the Principal of the Natal University College, and the Board hopes that it will not be long before the provision of the necessary accommodation becomes an accomplished fact.

W. M. POWER,
Chairman.
